

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original) Selected lactic bacterial strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus or Pediococcus, which strain has the capability of effecting the conversion of malic acid into lactic acid, said bacterium being characterised in that, when it is introduced at a concentration of between 10^6 and $5 \cdot 10^7$ UFC/ml, directly in the dried, freeze-dried or frozen state, into a wine which has an alcohol degree of 10 % or more and a pH greater than or equal to 3.5,

i) it converts at least 5 %, and preferably at least 10 %, of the malic acid into lactic acid in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and

ii) it converts at least 10 %, and preferably at least 25 %, of the malic acid into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

2. (original) Lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, characterised in that, when it is introduced at a concentration of between 10^6 and $5 \cdot 10^7$ UFC/ml, directly in the

dried, freeze-dried or frozen state, into a wine which has an alcohol degree of 10 % or more and a pH greater than or equal to 3.6,

iii) it converts at least 10 %, and preferably at least 15 %, of the malic acid into lactic acid in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and

iv) it converts at least 25 %, and preferably at least 40 %, of the malic acid into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

3. (previously presented) Lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, characterised in that it is homofermentary.

4. (previously presented) Malolactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, possessing in addition one or more of the following characteristics:

- it does not produce biogenic amine from the aminated

precursors,

- it does not degrade the glycerol, and
- it does not degrade the tartaric acid.

5. (original) Lactic bacterial strain according to claim 4, characterised in that it has the capability, when it is introduced directly at a concentration of $2 \cdot 10^6$ UFC/ml into a wine at a temperature greater than or equal to 18° C, having an SO_2 content of between 0 and 15 mg/l, an alcohol content greater than or equal to 10 % and a pH of 3.7 or more,

i) of converting 15 % of the malic acid into lactic acid in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and

ii) of converting 40 % of the malic acid into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

6. (original) Lactic bacterial strain according to claim 4, characterised in that it has the capability, when it is introduced directly at a concentration of $2 \cdot 10^6$ UFC/ml into a wine at a temperature greater than or equal to 18° C, having an SO_2 content of between 0 and 15 mg/l, an alcohol content greater than or equal to 10 % and a pH of 3.7 or more,

i) of converting 50 % of the malic acid into lactic acid in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and

ii) of converting 80 % of the malic acid into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

7. (previously presented) Malolactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, selected from the group formed from *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus delbrückii*, *Pediococcus acidilactici*, *Pediococcus damnaceus*, *Pediococcus pentosaceus*, *Pediococcus parvulus*, *Pediococcus cerevisiae*.

8. (previously presented) Malolactic bacterial strain according to claim 7, selected from the group composed of *Lactobacillus plantarum* DSM-9916, CNCM I-2924 *Pediococcus acidilactici* CNCM MA 18/5M.

9-17. (canceled)